



# KEESLER NEWS

KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

Train. Fight. Win.

NOV. 27, 2013 VOL. 74 NO. 46

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## Dragon Corner

# Developing our future Airmen

By Master Sgt. Anthony Barratini

338th Training Squadron

The 338th Training Squadron's mission is to professionally train cyberspace warfighters in Airmanship and apprentice skills across four Air Force specialty codes while developing experts in all skill levels.

The traditional role of the mission occurs in academic classrooms, labs, dorms and through drill and ceremony. The idea of developing Airmen and Airmanship seems like something we do only with trainees after they arrive at basic training, but as many recruiters can tell you, development occurs

before a trainee ever steps off the bus at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

Recently the 338th TRS Dark Knights had the opportunity to develop potential Airmen through the Pathways to Possibilities career expo for eighth graders at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Coliseum and Convention Center in Biloxi.

Approximately 8,000 students from Mississippi's southern six counties were able to attend the inaugural event Nov. 13-14. They explored 19 different career paths – agriculture, food and natural resources; architecture and construction; arts, audiovisual technology and communication; busi-

ness management and administration; education and training; finance; government and public administration; health sciences; hospitality and tourism; human services; information technology; law, public safety, corrections and security; manufacturing; marketing; engineering and polymer science; energy; aerospace; marine science and transportation, distribution and logistics.

Members of the 338th TRS mentored students on cyberspace careers available at Keesler and throughout the Air Force. Beyond that, they were able to tell students the importance of being part of something bigger than a

single individual.

"I was able to convey that while I'm proud of the training I have received and that we provide, we are part of a bigger team," commented Staff Sgt. Kirk Martin, radio frequency transmissions systems instructor. "We enable others in the fight to make important decisions because they are getting critical information instantly."

Keesler's involvement in programs like Pathways to Possibilities demonstrates how members of the 81st Training Group are developing our next generation of Airmen. You may be encouraging a middle-school student — or a future Air Force leader.

## Once an Airman, always an Airman

By Susan Griggs

81st Training Wing Public Affairs

One of my duties as Keesler's community relations chief is to provide base tours for former military members. Sometimes it's a large group, such as a recent reunion of Strategic Air Command's 1<sup>st</sup> Combat Evaluation Group. These veterans attended the dedication of a street in memory of Chief Master Sgt. Richard Etchberger, one of their own and a former Keesler graduate, who received the Medal of Honor.

More often, though, it's a former service member traveling through Biloxi who wants to step back in time for one last glimpse of his or her days as a member of the finest military organization in the world. It's hard to accommodate individual visits because of scheduling conflicts and limited resources, but I admit it ... it's hard for me to say "no" to these patriots who still treasure their time at Keesler.

My dad was an airman third class when he came to Keesler 61 years ago. He spent his entire 35-year federal career at Keesler, as an enlisted member and civil servant. Even though he passed away almost 12 years ago, I can still see that same Air Force pride reflected in the Keesler visitors I greet.

Let me introduce you to just a few of the people who have passed our way in the past year or so.

In 1956, Steve Goldin was a first lieutenant

who had just received his "wings" when he married his wife, Carolyn, while he was attending airborne electronics school at Keesler.

Sandy Araujo wanted to visit Bryan Hall, where she served as a permanent party member of Keesler's Women in the Air Force squadron in the 1960s.

Betty and Ken Carpenter both worked in the finance office in the 1960s. They met, fell in love and married while at Keesler.

Sally Mueller was anxious to have her husband and three children see the base named for her great uncle, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Samuel Reeves Keesler Jr., who was shot down over Germany during World War I.

Buck and Rita Cooper's wedding was at Larcher Chapel in 1972. He was a military policeman and she was a corpsman at the hospital.

Allee Hall seems to hold a special place for many of our visitors. In July, Paul (Allee) Heintz visited the building named for his father, Col. Edward Allee, who died in 1944 during a training mission. After 48 years, longtime WNBC broadcast journalist Chuck Scarborough recently returned to Allee Hall, where he spent his four years in the Air Force as an electronics instructor.

Team Keesler is a title that encompasses more than our current military members, civilians, retirees and their families. Every service member who has passed through our gates since Keesler Field opened in 1941 can claim a spot as part of the Keesler family.



### THE AIRMAN'S CREED

I AM AN AMERICAN AIRMAN.  
I AM A WARRIOR.  
I HAVE ANSWERED MY NATION'S CALL.

I AM AN AMERICAN AIRMAN.  
MY MISSION IS TO FLY, FIGHT, AND WIN.  
I AM FAITHFUL TO A PROUD HERITAGE,  
A TRADITION OF HONOR,  
AND A LEGACY OF VALOR.

I AM AN AMERICAN AIRMAN,  
GUARDIAN OF FREEDOM AND JUSTICE,  
MY NATION'S SWORD AND SHIELD,  
ITS SENTRY AND AVENGER.  
I DEFEND MY COUNTRY WITH MY LIFE.

I AM AN AMERICAN AIRMAN:  
WINGMAN, LEADER, WARRIOR.  
I WILL NEVER LEAVE AN AIRMAN BEHIND,  
I WILL NEVER FALTER,  
AND I WILL NOT FAIL.



# KEESLER NEWS

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## ON THE COVER

Lt. Gen. Michael Basla, Chief, Information Dominance and Chief Information Officer, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., congratulates 2nd Lt. Amanda Steele, 333rd Training Squadron Undergraduate Cyberspace Officer Training course student, after he presented her with her first assignment during the "Drop Night" event Nov. 21 at the marina. The Spartan themed event included the UCT students receiving their first assignments and playing the game, gladiator duels. More photos and story, Page 12-13.

Photo by Kemberly Groue



## PHOTO OF THE WEEK

## 81st CS wins AETC unit award



Photo by Kemberly Groue

Members of the 81st Communications Squadron pose for a group photo in front of their building Nov. 21. The 81st CS was recently awarded the 2013 Air Education and Training Command Information Dominance, Lt. Gen. Harold W. Grant Unit Award.



THE WORLD'S BEST AIRMEN — TRAINING, FIGHTING, WINNING



## Gen. Basla visits Keesler

Lt. Gen. Michael Basla, Chief, Information Dominance and Chief Information Officer, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., leads a biannual IT fundamental specialty training meeting Nov. 21 at Stennis Hall. Basla's two-day visit also included a breakfast with the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association Gulf Coast Chapter and tours of the 81st Training Group squadrons.

Photos by Kemberly Groue



Basla speaks to members of the 81st Communications Squadron.

Basla speaks to members of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association Gulf Coast Chapter on the current state and future of the cyber domain and its importance to the Air Force at the Bay Breeze Event Center.



# Former MTI's recovery turns tragedy to inspiration

By Airman 1st Class  
Zachary Vucic

Air Force News Service

BUCKLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — In the pitch blackness and pre-dawn stillness, his booming voice alone was enough to send several dozen new trainees into a frenzied scramble from the comfort of their bunks. His scowl was enough to keep those trainees frozen into a formation of stone figures.

Tech. Sgt. Matthew Zien was one of those military training instructors who seemed to have boundless energy, rousing new troops long before dawn and taking care of issues long after sunset. He was a textbook MTI.

That's what would make it hard to believe that Zien would be struggling with his life less than a year after turning in his campaign hat, dealing with an unforeseen illness that would not only threaten his life, but send him into the depths of despair that would put that MTI strength to the ultimate test.

Zien was stationed in Thule, Greenland, when, after a routine dental exam, his health took a slow decline, beginning with an irregular heartbeat, and would eventually turn into pneumonia and finally find him at death's door, hooked up to a life support system, not expected to live.

"I was unable to walk more than seven or eight steps without having to stop to catch my breath," Zien said. "All of my joints began hurting and my legs felt like they were on fire. My taste buds went completely sour and I completely lost my appetite."

Despite a steady decline in health, with recurring bouts of pneumonia, and swelling of his legs and feet, Zien went ahead with a scheduled leave to Alabama, where, within 12 hours of his arrival, was in the emergency room. After the ER nurse hooked Zien to an



Photo by Airman 1st Class Zachary Vucic

**Tech. Sgt. Matthew Zien speaks to students for Veterans Day Nov. 13 at Cimarron Elementary in Aurora, Colo. Zien hit his lowest low when he nearly lost his life in 2012 to medical issues, and relapsed into post-traumatic stress syndrome. He uses public speaking engagements and mentoring sessions to inspire resiliency for both the public and the Airmen he works with.**

EKG, she was startled with the printout, summoning doctors to look at the baffling results.

Doctors told Zien his heart was massively enlarged, and that he was suffering from a severe case of bacterial endocarditis, edema, severe aortic insufficiency, severe mitral valve regurgitation, pneumonia and congestive heart failure.

"My heart was working at 25 percent efficiency, and because it was beating so fast and so hard, for so long, it actually grew muscle," Zien said.

He was then taken to a hospital that specialized in cardiac surgery, where, during an operation that would include 42 hours of induced coma, he would have two heart valves replaced and a type of vegetation cleared from around his heart. During the operation, his vital organs began to shut down in a domino effect. With family and friends gathered round, the prognosis for the former MTI was bleak.

Zien would survive the operations and begin a slow road to recovery. But according

to Zien, the surgery was the easy part. "The recovery from this has been overwhelmingly humbling. Physically, I have recovered extremely fast and I've maintained a strong, optimistic and positive attitude. The real battle with this recovery has been psychological."

As he recovered, his mind began to play tricks on him and he began to hear the ticking of the metal replacement valves in his heart, something he compares to Edgar Allan Poe's "the Tell-Tale Heart." Zien said he would lie in bed at night and listen to the valves in his heart and every tick would tell him that he had somehow failed.

"My nightmares were unbelievable," he said. "I dreamt of my death thousands of times, and it seemed that every time I would close my eyes I would die. It completely consumed me."

But the nail that would drive the normally optimistic and positive Zien to contemplate suicide would be one that affected what he held closest to his heart — his children.

"I got a letter in the mail requesting full legal and sole custody of my kids," Zien said. "My kids are my life. I was put on this planet to be a father. I know this for a fact. My thought process was whether or not I would rather have my kids not know who I was."

At that point Zien said he had several plans in mind to take his own life. He hated his heart to the point where he decided to stop taking his heart medication, jumped on his bike and rode 85 miles to inflict as much damage as he could. He became dizzy, crashed, but survived. It was then he decided it was time for help.

"I had to admit to myself that I was powerless. I knew for a fact that nobody's going to fix it but me. It couldn't be anybody else. It had to be me...but I couldn't do it."

It was then that Zien dug deep into his MTI roots, reinforcing the lessons he taught his trainees. He said that when things began to get negative, he would visualize MTI Zien pushing him to

stay on course and not quit. He began setting goals, some as simple as getting out of bed each morning without a negative thought. Then it was to make coffee each morning, again without any type of negativity involved.

"The good thing about action is that it created momentum, which in turn, enabled further action," he said.

The momentum in Zien's case would come in the form of the Wounded Warrior program. Although he didn't see himself as a wounded warrior, Zien was invited to join them for a sports camp, and feels that the encounter has changed his life.

"It's because of the Air Force Wounded Warrior program that I am where I am," Zien said. "Even just knowing those wounded warriors on a personal level has lifted me up to a point I can't imagine."

Set to be medically retired in the months ahead, Zien is giving back, using his story of resiliency to influence other Airmen, as well as others in the community. Even though he is still considered a patient at the Buckley AFB clinic, he has become more of a mentor than a victim.

"With everything he's been through, his positivity is really inspiring," said Airman 1st Class Hannah Metz, a medical technician with the 460th Medical Group.

"He makes me want to teach other Airmen," added Airman 1st Class Christina Miller, an aerospace medical services apprentice.

Today Zien said that when he wakes up each morning, he places his hand over his heart and embraces who he is. He moves forward with a daily goal of having a good day and making an impact on some else's life. "It's amazing how much it has helped me to help other people. Creating this environment I need to be in has actually helped me to get better."

# Welsh: Air Force must get handle on pay, benefits

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

GRAND FORKS AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. — The Air Force must control the growth of pay and benefits or the service will be hard pressed to perform its primary mission to fight and win America's wars, the service's top officer said here yesterday.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III said pay, benefits and medical costs constitute about half of the Air Force's budget — and those costs are growing.

Left unchecked there will

come a time when the service cannot do its job "because all we're doing is paying our people," Welsh said. Some experts believe this will occur in 2023, others by 2032.

All service leaders agree there's a problem, he said.

The general said this is not a scare tactic on the part of senior leaders in DOD.

"There is absolutely no motivation for a service chief to try and scare people in his service — none," Welsh said. "Everything we do is about taking care of them. Nobody cares more about the men and women in

our services than the service chiefs. And nobody wants to do what's right for them more than we do. Scaring them is the last thing on our minds."

Welsh said no service leader is talking about cutting pay and benefits, just slowing the growth. He speaks of managing growth in a different way.

"Our people will understand that," the general said.

The U.S. Congress, the Department of Defense and the services have over the past 20 years provided excellent benefits and comparable pay to military members.

"We've all benefited immensely and we thank them for that," Welsh said. "But it is time to slow it down a little bit until we know we can do our primary job, which is fight and win the nation's wars."

He wants Congress to consider things like slowing down the growth of the military pay raise for the next couple of years while DOD grapples with fiscal issues caused by sequestration.

The service chiefs understand and accept that the department must do its part to deal with America's national debt.

"But no one would argue

the mechanism of sequestration is the most effective way to do that. It's absolutely not," Welsh said.

The way sequestration operates is the problem, he said.

"Every business in the world — if it wanted to downsize and refocus — would take down infrastructure the first couple of years, reinvest the savings in the product lines that work and then make the cuts over the second half of the 10-year period," Welsh said.

This is not the way sequestration operates. DOD cannot touch infrastructure and personnel accounts are protected. The money has to come from somewhere and that means funds for modernization and readiness will be hit most heavily.

"We haven't been allowed to slow growth on the pay side or the medical side or do anything about infrastructure costs, so everything is going to come out of modernization, force structure and readiness," Welsh said. "There is no other option. That's where the money is."



# KEESLER NOTES

## Holiday Walkathon

The health and wellness center is hosting a step challenge from Nov. 29-Jan. 1. Participants may register Nov. 18-Nov. 27 to get a pedometer and log book to begin tallying steps Nov. 29. Log book turn-in will be Jan. 2-Jan 6, 2014.

Free shirts will be given to all participants with completed log books and medals awarded to those who average 8,000-10,000 steps, 10,000-12,000 steps, and 12,000-14,000 steps a day during the six-week challenge.

For more information, call 228-376-3170.

## Keesler Commissary closed for Thanksgiving

The Keesler Commissary is closed Thursday and Friday in observance of Thanksgiving. Regular hours, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., resume on Saturday.

## AAFES holiday hours

The Army and Air Force

Exchange Service is bucking the trend by not opening its stores on Thanksgiving Day, but bargain-hungry customers can shop online at [www.shop-myexchange.com](http://www.shop-myexchange.com) on the holiday for bargains on gift items ranging from designer handbags to diamond rings.

The only AAFES facility at Keesler open on Thanksgiving is the shoppette/Class VI. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Keesler Exchange is open 4 a.m. to 10 p.m., on "Black Friday," with significant savings on TVs, gaming systems and other items.

Saturday's hours are 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., with deals for the entire family, including TVs, home theater systems, stainless steel sports watches, cribs and crib mattresses.

More savings are planned from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday, with bargains on TVs, cosmetics and activity gyms for kids and toddler furniture.

On "Cyber Monday," AAFES offers an array of online-only deals such as designer totes, coffee brewers and select men's and women's gift sets.

"With deals such as these, we don't expect there to be too many leftovers," said Lisa Comstock, Keesler's main store manager. "In addition to the great savings at our exchange locations, the online specials will be updated and changed daily as well. Any way you slice it, exchanges will have everything military families need at the right price."

## Holiday Exodus Dates

Dec. 21-Jan. 2, 2014

## 81st FSS MPS, SPC office closed

81st Force Support Squadron Military Personnel Section and Student Processing Center will be closed Friday starting at noon for an official function.

The customer service section of the MPS will remain open and provide limited services.

## 5K for AJ

The 335th Training Squadron has organized a "5K for AJ" fundraiser, 9 a.m. Dec. 14 in the Triangle.

Proceeds from the event will help purchase a hand-peddled cycle for Master Sgt. Albert "AJ" Jackson, a squadron member paralyzed from the waist down after surgery last summer.

The registration fee is \$10 and may be paid until the day of the event.

For more information or to sign up, call Senior Master Sgt. Jerrod Webb, 377-1957.

## Parking lot closure

Keesler Medical Center's A-Tower parking lot closed Dec. 6-8.

Weather permitting, Keesler Medical Center's A-Tower parking lot will be closed for cleaning and striping Dec. 6-8. This is the parking area directly across from the steps leading

to the A-Tower.

All vehicles must be removed and both visitors and staff are asked to use alternate parking areas. Everyone is asked not to park in the area to ensure the work can be completed as scheduled.

All entrances to the A-Tower lot will be closed at 6 p.m., Dec. 5 and only the north entrance, across from the medical center, will be available for exiting traffic only.

The parking lot is slated to reopen Dec. 9.

If necessary, alternate dates are Dec. 20-22 for the maintenance.

## Click, Call, Walk

MyPay is a versatile, user-friendly site for civilian and Military finance customers to use. It is available 24/7 for numerous transactions. Customers can also update their direct deposit information and number of tax exemptions. Allotments, thrift savings plan contributions can be started, stopped, or changed, effective two to four weeks after submission. Users can also check if their defense travel system orders have paid yet and how much. They can also print W-2s and submit a withdrawal request for the Savings Deposit Program. It is an invaluable tool for enabling customers to control and monitor their pay records.

Click, Call, Walk refers to the options finance customers have to ask questions and access financial assistance. "Click" refers to Web-based self-service items that members can access through the Air Force Portal. There is an extensive FAQ, calculators for permanent change of station, temporary duty assignments, taxes, in addition to links to several other finance-related web sites. If the member can't find what they need, then they can "Call" their local finance office to ask questions with a finance expert. Lastly, every customer can "Walk" into their local finance office and receive help.

# KEESLER EVENTS CALENDAR

## Today

**8 a.m.** — Newcomer's orientation at the airman and family readiness center.

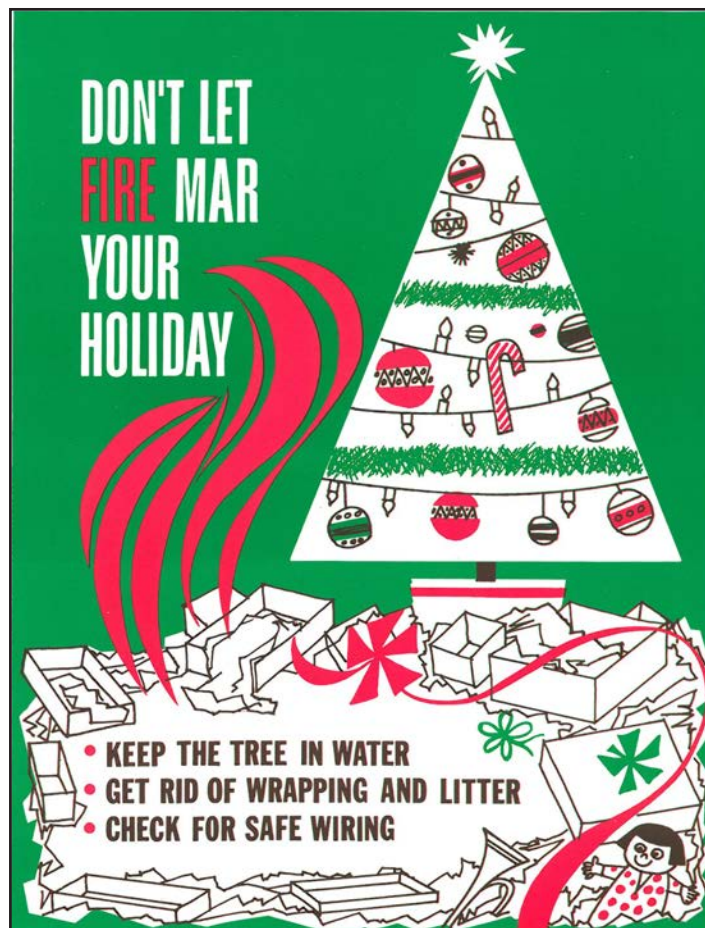
## Thursday

**10:30 a.m.** — Thanksgiving brunch at the Bay Breeze Collocated Club.

## Saturday

**4:30 p.m.** — Ping-pong tournament at the Vandenberg Community Center.

## Safety Retro-spective





# For two Airmen, hunting trip turns to saving life

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — A November hunting trip in the extreme North turned into a lifesaving opportunity in the blink of an eye for two master sergeants from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

It was a cold night, even by Alaska standards: 7-below temperatures with a 35-below wind chill factor. Air Force master sergeants David Barber and Morgan Cabaniss, 673d Security Forces Squadron, were on the tail end of a long drive up the Dalton Highway — known locally as “Haul Road,” to join four friends in a caribou hunt.

By 11 p.m., Nov. 2, the sergeants were about a hundred miles north of the Arctic Circle and a couple of hours from their rendezvous point when Cabaniss noticed something wrong.

“We were going over Atigun Pass when we came up on a trucker. He was going really slowly, and I could see his tail lights reflecting off the road behind him,” Cabaniss said. “I had just told Dave [Barber] that the road must be really slick, when the truck started to jackknife. We could see his tail lights and his headlights both pointing back at us!”

Barber explained what happened next.

“There was a turn in the road ahead of him, but he was jackknifed and slid right over the edge of the road and hit a snow bank. The truck came to rest with the cab in the snow bank and the back tires of the trailer on the road,” Barber said. “But he was right at the edge of about a 600-foot drop.”

“That snow was the only thing between him and the drop.”

Barber stopped their vehicle about 80 yards from the wrecked semi, concerned they might join the driver in a long skid down the icy, treacherous road.

While Barber quickly began putting on heavy winter gear that had been too bulky to drive with, Cabaniss sprang into action — running toward the accident.

“I just did it; just went,” Cabaniss said. “I didn’t really think about it. And when I got to the edge of the road and looked down the embankment, I saw the door of the cab propped open. The trucker was wedged between the door and the side of his vehicle.”

Barber said his friend’s next words made the danger clear.

“We’ve gotta get him out of here — the truck may go down!” Cabaniss shouted.

So Cabaniss went over the edge of the road and found himself in waist-deep snow without even hitting a solid surface



Courtesy photo

**A tractor-trailer jackknifed on the Dalton Highway at Atigun Pass, Alaska, Nov. 2. In the vehicle behind the truck, two Air Force master sergeants were going hunting. They stopped and extracted the driver, who was perilously close to a 600-foot drop.**

below. He half-swam his way to the cab and helped the dazed and injured trucker out.

Unfortunately, the trucker had not been fully geared up against the elements while driving, and the violent impact had tossed all the gear around the damaged cab.

“He was freaking out. He only had jeans and a T-shirt on, and had managed to grab a boot and a tennis shoe when he came out of the cab,” Cabaniss said. “And he appeared shocked ... he kind of froze up on me.”

Aside from the trucker’s delayed ability to move, Cabaniss realized he would soon literally freeze up, based on the elements and lack of shoes and proper clothing.

In addition, there was still a very real possibility the truck would slide off the drop — taking them both with it to their doom.

“I told him the truck might go, and that got him moving a bit,” Cabaniss said. “So I helped pull him back through that deep snow and then we got him back to our vehicle to warm up. We put a jacket on him and gave him water.”

Barber said the pair then drove about 10 miles back down the road, where they’d noticed a highway maintenance station with a pay phone.

Cell phone service was non-existent in the remote area.

The trucker managed to dial a few numbers and they put out some calls on a citizen’s band radio, but no one answered in either case.

About 35 minutes later, a Department of Transportation safety official finally came by the station and picked up the driver.

It was the last the master sergeants saw of the man whose life they’d saved, but

they contacted his employer and learned the driver is already back out on the road.

“We found out this guy was one of the most experienced truckers operating in the area,” Cabaniss said. “That fact, plus the fact that besides us, no one else would have come by for 45 minutes or more, really made me realize that in Alaska, you have to always be ready to take care of yourself.”

“You can’t always just run outside and yell for help or make a phone call. His truck wasn’t running due to the wreck. In those temperatures, he probably wouldn’t have lasted the 45 minutes until someone else came by, especially not being dressed for the weather.”

Barber said the experience reinforced the need to dress properly, have all emergency supplies, and be ready and able to help yourself or others should a situation take a turn for the worse.

Cabaniss said he’s been up that route many times before and has never seen something like this happen, which could lead to a false sense of safety and security.

“You just can’t get complacent here,” Cabaniss said.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Sheila deVera

**Master sergeants David Barber and Morgan Cabaniss, 673rd Security Forces Squadron, pose for the camera on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Nov. 18. Barber and Cabaniss rescued a wrecked trucker 100 miles north of Arctic Circle braving -35 degree windchill and subzero temperature.**



# How to report a sexual assault

## 81st Training Wing Safety Office

If you have been sexually assaulted or think you may have been:

- Go to a safe location.
- Contact your local Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), or healthcare personnel. You may also contact your chain of command or law enforcement (military or civilian), however if you do, an investigation will occur and you will not have the option of making a Restricted Report (see below).

- Seek medical care as soon as possible. Even if you do not have any visible physical injuries, you may be at risk of becoming pregnant or acquiring a sexually transmitted disease. - Ask healthcare personnel to conduct a sexual assault forensic examination (SAFE) to preserve forensic evidence. - If you suspect you had been drugged, request that a urine sample be collected.

- Preserve all evidence of the assault. Do not bathe, wash your hands or brush your teeth. Do not clean or straighten up the crime scene.

- Write down, tape or record by any other means all the details you can recall about the assault and your assailant.

## Reporting Options:

### Restricted Reporting

This option is for victims of sexual assault who wish to confidentially disclose the crime to specifically identified individuals and receive medical treatment and services without triggering the official investigative process. Service members who are sexually assaulted and desire restricted reporting under this policy must report the assault to a sexual assault response coordinator (SARC), victim advocate (VA), or a healthcare personnel.

Healthcare personnel will initiate the appropriate care and treatment, and report the sexual assault to the SARC in lieu of reporting the assault to law enforcement or the chain of command. Upon notification of a reported sexual assault, the SARC will immediately assign an advocate to the victim. The assigned Victim Advocate will provide accurate information on the process of restricted and/or unrestricted reporting.

At the victim's discretion or request an appropriately trained healthcare personnel shall conduct a sexual assault forensic examination (SAFE), which may include the collection of evidence. In the absence of a Department of Defense provider, the service member will be referred to an appropriate civilian facility for the SAFE.

### Who can make a restricted report

Restricted reporting is available at this time to military personnel of the Armed Forces and the Coast Guard. Military personnel include members on active duty and members of the Reserve component (Reserve and National Guard) provided they are performing federal duty (active duty training or inactive duty training and members of the National Guard in Federal (Title 10) status).

Military dependents 18 years of age and older who are eligible for treatment in the military healthcare system, at installations in the conti-

nental United States (CONUS) and outside of the continental United States (OCONUS), and who were victims of sexual assault perpetrated by someone other than a spouse or intimate partner may make a restricted report.

Retired members of any component are not eligible. Members of the Reserve Component not performing Federal duty are not eligible. Department of Defense civilian employees are not eligible.

### Considerations when electing a restricted report

- You receive appropriate medical treatment, advocacy, and counseling.
- Provides some personal space and time to consider your options and to begin the healing process.

- Empowers you to seek relevant information and support to make more informed decisions about participating in the criminal investigation.

- You control the release and management of your personal information.

- You decide whether and when to move forward with initiating an investigation.

### Unrestricted Reporting

This option is for victims of sexual assault who desire medical treatment, referral services and an official investigation of the crime. When selecting unrestricted reporting, you should use current reporting channels, e.g. chain of command, law enforcement or report the incident to the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), or request healthcare personnel to notify law enforcement. Upon notification of a reported sexual assault, the SARC will immediately assign a Victim Advocate (VA). At the victim's discretion/request, healthcare personnel shall conduct a sexual assault forensic examination (SAFE), which may include the collection of evidence. Details regarding the incident will be limited to only those personnel who have a legitimate need to know.

**Note:** Additional Restricted and Unrestricted Reporting considerations can be further be discussed with your Sexual Assault Response Coordinator or VA.

### Role of the sexual assault response coordinator

The Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) is considered the center of gravity when it comes to ensuring that victims of sexual assault receive appropriate and responsive care. They serve as the single point of contact to coordinate sexual assault victim care. The term sexual assault response coordinator (SARC) is a standardized term utilized throughout the Department of Defense and the Services to facilitate communication and transparency regarding sexual assault response capability.

### Role of the victim advocate

The victim advocate provides essential support and care to the victim to include providing non-clinical information on available options and resources to assist the victim in making informed decisions as they progress through resolution and healing. The VA maintains communications and contact with victim as needed for continued victim support.

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# Airman survives Bosnian conflict, gains perspective

By Staff Sgt.  
Christopher Hubenthal

99th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. — As a 9-year-old girl growing up in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Capt. Merima White had everything she needed: friends, family — a wonderful life; until one day she lost everything.

White, who is now a 99th Medical Operations Squadron family medicine residency resident physician here, lived through the growing conflict of the Serbian paramilitary forces as they surrounded Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992. During the Bosnian conflict, Serb forces bombarded the city with heavy artillery and snipers targeted civilians without hesitation, aiming at schools and hospitals inhabited by the young and the elderly.

“One morning I woke up and the city was surrounded,” White said. “There were people shooting at kids and families. I really didn’t understand it. I could never understand why people would do that, but it happened; and this once Olympic city that was always a popular destination for travelers was reduced to shambles.”

White described this era in her life as a time when each and every day was filled with uncertainty.

“You just lived in darkness awaiting the next artillery attack and insurgency,” she added.

White was just a young child during the time and didn’t quite know what to make of the situation. She recalls having to travel and risk a lot just to attain basic life essentials.

“I went from this life of what I considered having everything I wanted as a child to not knowing if I was going to wake up the next day,” White said. “I remember running 10 miles to get water while evading snipers. We had to wait for the fog to thicken so the snipers wouldn’t pick us off while trying to get food and water. Sometimes you couldn’t afford to wait anymore and you would just have to go out

to get food and water for you and your family.”

For White, this era of her life was about surviving and helping others when she could — traits her father showcased on a daily basis. During her father’s heroic acts he was injured twice.

“The first time was when we were in line to receive milk and bread because we had to shuttle food through the city as the resources were all depleted,” White said. “Obviously they would figure out when the lines were forming and they would bomb the lines of kids and families waiting to get food. My father took shrapnel to his legs and was unable to walk for several months.”

Despite White’s father’s injuries, he immediately sought to help the community as soon as he regained his health.

“As soon as he got back on his feet he was trying to deliver water to families that couldn’t get out of the area to get some,” White said. “The truck was bombed and he was ejected falling onto the railroad tracks resulting in a broken neck. We thought he was going to die in three to five days. Miraculously, he regained sensation in his body and Doctors Without Borders’ who were in the hospital at the time thought that evacuating him to the USA would give him the opportunity to walk again.”

According to the Doctors Without Borders official website, the DWB is an international medical humanitarian organization created by doctors and journalists in France in 1971. The organization is committed to bringing quality medical care to people in crisis regardless of their race, religion or political affiliation.

White’s family took the recommendation to heart and made preparations to evacuate the city.

“For us to get out of the city we had to go through enemy territory,” White said. “The Air Force, at that time, was flying in and dropping off humanitarian aid. It was towards the tail end of the war, December 1994, and we had

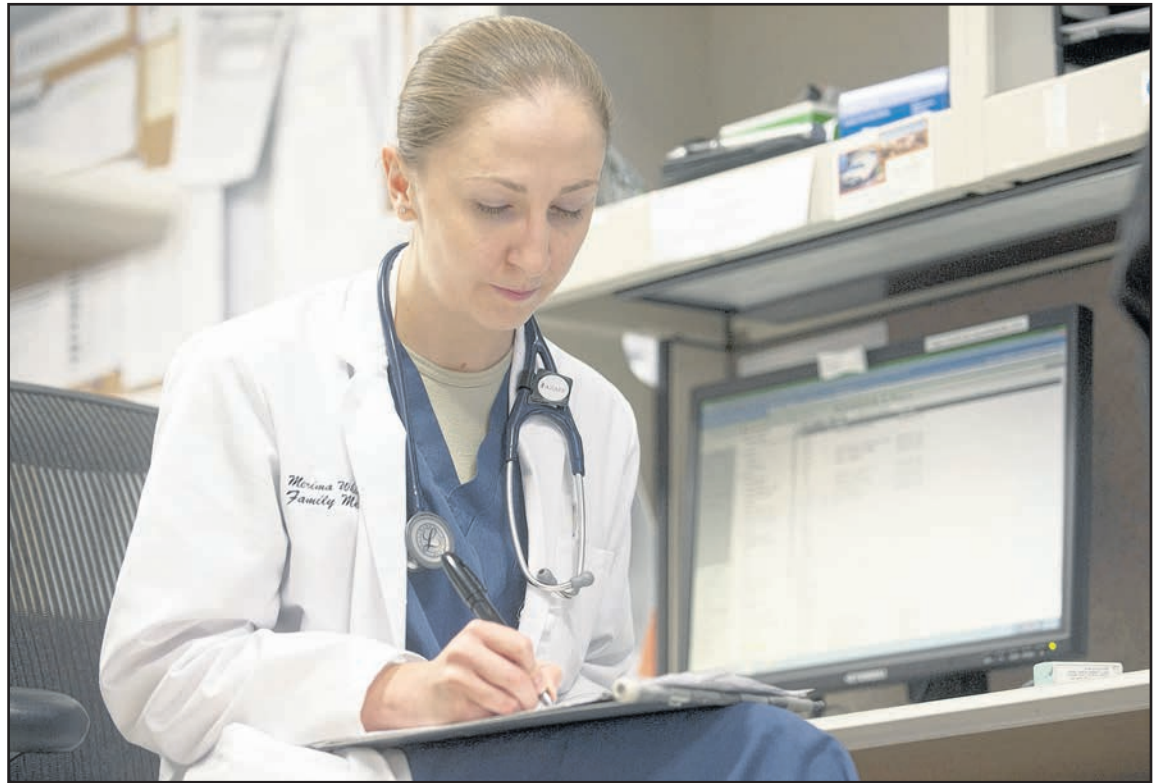


Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Hubenthal

Capt. (Dr.) Merima White fills out paperwork for a patient Nov. 16 at the Mike O’Callaghan Federal Medical Center, Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. White grew up in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina during the Bosnian conflict as a child and moved to the U.S. in 1994. White views her day-to-day operations as a chance to give back to the Air Force for the kindness Airmen showed her and her family during her journey to the U.S. White is a 99th Medical Operations Squadron family medicine residency resident physician.

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**“I wanted to give back to the amazing men and women who helped me and my family; and to be a part of something that great is amazing.”**

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— White

to get to the airport to get out of the city. The only way to do that was to get help from the United Nations.”

Despite the U.N.’s willingness to help, the situation still presented very real dangers.

“We had to sign a paper that stated that if we were pulled over we would be handed over for execution,” White said. “It was a scary thought because we knew that if we did get pulled over it wouldn’t just be an execution. There were concentration camps and all sorts of horrific acts took place there. Thankfully we made it to the airport safe and sound and were able to board a plane.”

In 1994, White and her family traveled from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Germany, Maryland, Texas and finally to

Luke Air Force Base, Ariz.

White remembers her stop in Maryland the most. During one of the scariest times of her life, she experienced kindness of strangers that she had never witnessed before.

“I will never forget the kindness of people,” White said. “There were Airmen that stayed and played cards with me. I didn’t speak any English and I was really scared. It was New Year’s Eve and I was still a kid so I was wandering the hallways with Airmen who were trying to entertain me. It was the most human kindness from strangers that I had ever seen and it really made an impact on my life.”

The treatment the Airmen showed White upon her family’s arrival was part of the reason she decided to join the Air Force.

“I wanted to give back to the amazing men and women who helped me and my family; and to be a part of something that great is amazing,” White said.

Through her experiences, White formed her own idea of what defines a warrior.

“Living a life of a warrior is working to preserve our way of life,” White said. “We don’t just fight for ourselves, but we fight for the freedom that this nation provides. To keep our warriors healthy is to keep our entire nation healthy and safe.”

White now works within the Family Medicine Residency Program at Nellis where she aims to give back to the men and women of the Air Force that helped her and her family nearly two decades ago.



# Airman upholds island culture while serving

By Tech Sgt. Matthew Bates

## Airman Magazine

Staff Sgt. Matthew Thomas crisscrosses a patch of barren beach north of Honolulu in a lifted, older style Toyota Tacoma, a truck that is a lot like him: a stalwart, determined workhorse that is both dependable and gets the job done.

Stopping, he gets out, lowers the tailgate and begins changing into a wetsuit. Staring at the Pacific Ocean stretching out before him, he is excited.

"I just love being in the water," he said.

He grabs some gear — a pair of flippers, a pair of goggles and a speargun — and heads toward the beach.

It's time to go in.

He wades out until he is waist deep in the crystal blue water and pauses. He looks up to the sky, then says a short prayer and tosses a handful of water over each shoulder.

"Every time I enter the water, I ask it to bless me and keep me safe," Thomas said. "It's kind of a tradition where I come from."

Where he comes from is Guam, a small island in the Pacific that is steeped in a culture of respect for the land and water and the things they provide.

"From an early age, my grandfather taught me to how to be one with nature and the water," Thomas said. "And he also taught me to respect it because it can be just as dangerous as it is beautiful."

This is something Thomas became painfully aware of as a teenager. Two of his cousins went out in the water one afternoon and never came back.

"They were just gone," Thomas said. "Lost to the sea."

Thomas thinks of them now as he walks deeper into the water and asks them to watch over him. Then, in one effortless motion, he dives below the surf and is immersed in a completely different world.

Instantly, his cares are lost to the beauty around him — the shimmering coral formations, the colorful species of fish and the profound silence this underwater world affords him. But, as amazing as the scenery is, Thomas doesn't stare for long. This isn't a sight-seeing trip.

It's a hunt.

Thomas is a spearfisherman, upholding a centuries-old tradition of fishing where he free-dives and uses a speargun to capture fish. But even while fishing, he is still respectful of his surroundings.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Bennie Davis III

Staff Sgt. Matthew Thomas with his speargun in the waters of Pokai Bay on Oahu. For Thomas, spearfishing is a way to get in tune with his heritage and nature, and his family eats everything he catches.

"I never fish anything I don't intend to eat," he said. "It goes back to my upbringing and the lessons my grandfather taught me — respect nature and only take what you need from it."

Spearfishing isn't easy. The style takes a strong swimmer who is able to hold his breath for long periods of time and someone with a lot of patience.

"The fish don't just swim up to you," Thomas said. "You really have to look for them and try to figure out where they hang out and how they act. It's hard work, but I really enjoy it."

Thomas' passion and dedication isn't reserved for

spearfishing. He brings both to his "real" job, where he works as a flying crew chief on C-17 Globemaster IIIs and C-40 Clippers with the 15th Maintenance Group at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

It's paying off, too. Thomas was recently named the 2012 Pacific Air Forces crew chief of the year, an honor he shrugs off with casual humility.

"I love what I do, and I just do the best I can every day," he said.

One of the reasons he loves his job is because it's hands-on and Thomas is all about using his. Building things, repairing cars, catching wildlife — if it involves hands, Thomas is all over it.

This, too, he attributes to his background.

"Growing up on an island, you learn to be resourceful and make do with what you have," he said. "And I remember watching my grandfather make everything he needed, and I guess it's just stuck with me."

Another thing that's stuck with him is the island way of life. He's laid back and cares about family. When he entered the Air Force, he did go through a bit of culture shock, though.

"Yeah, it was crazy at first because there was just so much I didn't know," he said. "Everything was so hectic and fast-paced, and I used to ask so many questions people

would get annoyed and tell me leave them alone."

But then he would retreat to the water and find his groove again.

"When I'm spearfishing, it's exciting," he said. "I feel in tune with my heritage and nature, and you forget about all the little things you were worried about. Out there, it's just me and my thoughts and a lot of beautiful stuff."

Performing off duty activities that relieve stress is important, say Air Force mental health officials.

"Self-care is important," said Tech. Sgt. Brian Hornberger, the 359th Medical Operations Squadron mental health flight chief at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas. "You should make sure you're connected to something, whether it's family, friends or an organization or group where you feel you belong. You should also make time to work out, travel, play sports or read a book."

Spearfishing isn't just a stress reliever for Thomas, though. It's mostly something he simply loves to do that reminds him of his childhood and opens his eyes to new experiences.

"Out there, in the ocean, it's just a different world," Thomas said. "Every time I go out there, I see something new, and it's just so peaceful."



Thomas conducts an engine start on a C-40 Clipper during a maintenance check. Thomas is a flying crew chief who travels with the C-40 to all its destinations.